



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2009

**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER,
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL,
JANICE OH
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600**

**DEA
ERIN MCKENZIE-MULVEY
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 337-2906**

**NYPD
PAUL BROWNE
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(646) 610-8989**

**ICE
LOU MARTINEZ
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
(646) 313-2716**

**U.S. CHARGES COLOMBIAN PARAMILITARY LEADER WITH
CONSPIRING TO SUPPORT TERRORISM AND TO
IMPORT TON-QUANTITIES OF COCAINE**

LEV L. DASSIN, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, JOHN P. GILBRIDE, Special Agent-In-Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), RAYMOND W. KELLY, Police Commissioner of the City of New York ("NYPD"), and PETER J. SMITH, Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), announced today the return of a Superseding Indictment charging DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA, a/k/a "Don Mario," a/k/a "El Viejo," a/k/a "El Tio," a/k/a "La Senora," with conspiring to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* ("AUC"), and to import thousands of kilograms of cocaine into the United States.

According to the Superseding Indictment returned today, which adds DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA to a previously filed Indictment in this case:

The AUC is a Colombian right-wing paramilitary and drug-trafficking organization, designated by the U.S. State Department as both a Foreign Terrorist Organization and a Specially-Designated Global Terrorist Organization.

The AUC is engaged in armed conflict with the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia* ("FARC"), Colombia's main left-wing guerilla group and seeks to remove FARC sympathizers from positions of power and influence in Colombia. To support its political and terrorist objectives, the AUC involves itself in narcotics trafficking, for example by "taxing" narcotics traffickers operating in areas under AUC control. The AUC uses the narcotics proceeds to secure military-grade arms, including automatic assault rifles and grenades.

Prior to his capture by Colombian National Police on April 15, 2009, DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA was the leader of a "Bloque" of 5,000 armed AUC paramilitary fighters responsible for establishing and maintaining AUC control over the Cordoba and Antioquia regions of Colombia. RENDON-HERRERA helped finance his Bloque's terrorist activities, which included the kidnapping of civilians, by levying a "tax" on cocaine that he permitted to pass through areas under his Bloque's control.

Prior to 2006, DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA's AUC Bloque was commanded by his brother and co-defendant, FREDDY ENRIQUE RENDON-HERRERA, 41, a/k/a "El Aleman," who also oversaw aspects of the Bloque's narcotics trafficking activities, such as the "taxing" of narcotics shipments that were permitted to pass through territory controlled by the Bloque. In 2006, however, FREDDY ENRIQUE RENDON-HERRERA demobilized as part of the Colombian government's Justice and Peace process -- a process under which paramilitary members who surrender to the Government, relinquish their criminally-derived assets, confess their crimes, and do not commit further crimes, may receive a reduced sentence and amnesty from extradition. DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA did not enter the Justice and Peace process, refused to demobilize, and by prior arrangement with FREDDY ENRIQUE RENDON-HERRERA, reconstituted his brother's Bloque under a different name. DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA remained the leader of the Bloque until at least April 2009. Co-defendant JHON JAIRO RENDON-HERRERA, 40, assisted both of his brothers in commanding the Bloque and running its narcotics trafficking activities. Co-defendants DIEGO RIVAS-ANGEL, 57, DAIRO ANTONIO USUGA-DAVID, 37, and JUAN DE DIOS USUGA-DAVID, 41, provided logistical support and coordination for the Bloques's narcotics trafficking operations.

DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA, 44, and his co-defendants are all charged with one count of conspiracy to import narcotics into the United States. DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA is also charged with conspiring to provide material support for a foreign terrorist organization. If convicted on the narcotics conspiracy charge, the defendants face a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison. DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison on the charge of conspiring to support a foreign terrorist organization. The case is assigned to United States District Judge LORETTA A. PRESKA. DANIEL RENDON-HERRERA is currently in custody in Colombia under Colombian charges. Prior to his capture, RENDON-HERRERA had been named by the Department of Justice to the list of Consolidated Priority Organization Targets, a list of the world's most dangerous narcotics trafficking targets.

Mr. DASSIN praised the outstanding investigative work of the DEA's Bogota Country Office and New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, the latter of which is comprised of agents and officers of the DEA, the NYPD, ICE, and the New York State Police. Mr. DASSIN also thanked the Colombian National Police and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs for their ongoing assistance.

Mr. DASSIN stated: "We remain committed to investigating and prosecuting terrorist groups that finance their operations through narcotics trafficking. The charges against RENDON-HERRERA and his capture represent significant steps in the fight against the most dangerous narco-terrorist groups."

DEA Special Agent-in-Charge JOHN P. GILBRIDE stated, "Years of investigation have led to these charges against one of the most notorious drug traffickers in the world, Don Mario. Due to the intense collaboration, DEA and our law enforcement partners have sent a message to drug traffickers that our communities will not tolerate drug trafficking and the associated crimes."

"This case is a prime example of how ICE actively works with foreign governments and other law enforcement agencies to dismantle these narco-terrorist organizations," said PETER J. SMITH, Special Agent-in-Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in New York. "These drug smugglers should take notice that we have a global reach on them and will not hesitate to bring them to justice."

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United

States Attorneys BENJAMIN A. NAFTALIS and JOCELYN E. STRAUBER are in charge of the prosecution.

The charge and allegations contained in the Indictment are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

09-104

###